

## **CALIFORNIA CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION**

### **2000-2001 FISCAL YEAR OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES**

**Adopted July 20, 2000**

The California Children and Families Commission (State Commission) was created in November 1998 by the passage of Proposition 10 (Prop 10), the California Children and Families Act (Act). While the majority of the funding generated by Prop10 goes to County Commissions for use in their own communities, the State Commission retains significant resources that it seeks to direct toward strategic activities that will have statewide benefit in carrying out the fundamental purposes of the Act. The following offers an overview of the State Commission's philosophy, role, and objectives and priorities that will guide the efforts of the Commission for the coming year, as well as general information about the Commission's funding process.

**Purpose of Prop 10:** The purpose of Prop10, the California Children and Families Act, is to help make sure that all our youngest Californians, from prenatal to five years old, get the best possible start in life. The Act stresses the importance of young children receiving nurturing interaction with their parents and other caregivers, good health care and nutrition, and the stimulating learning opportunities they need in order to be ready for school. Research has shown that the human brain continues to grow and take shape in response to its environment for some years after birth; a child's earliest experiences lay the foundation for school readiness at age five, an important milestone that in turn has significant implications for his or her later development. Recognizing the enormous potential benefit of early investments in children's well being, the Act aims to make the research on early child development more widely understood by parents and the general public and to use it as a cornerstone for more effective local and statewide policies and programs. The Act also works to protect young children from exposure to harmful substances like tobacco, drugs, or alcohol, and to make sure that expectant mothers have access to and know the importance of good prenatal care.

**How Prop 10 Works:** Prop 10 is funded by a tobacco tax that generates approximately \$700 million annually, allowing California for the first time to provide major non-categorical resources to helping its youngest children and their families. Newly created County Commissions in each of California's 58 counties receive 80 percent of Prop 10 funding to support the healthy development of young children in their county, based on strategic plans developed with extensive community input. The remaining 20 percent goes to the State Commission, located in Sacramento, for purposes described in detail below.

#### **Role of the California Children and Families Commission (State Commission) in Supporting the County Commissions**

Recognizing that the actual work with young children is at the local level and that local communities best understand their own specific needs, Prop 10 directs the vast majority of funding to the County Commissions and gives them a great deal of discretion in using it. Prop 10 funding is purposely non-categorical and flexible. Ideally, County Commissions can use the funds strategically-- complementing existing funds to fill resource gaps and create new crosscutting projects that bring together resources from different programs and parts of the community to serve young children in a new and more effective way.

In order to produce the systemic changes in knowledge, practices, and organizational structures that will lead to measurable improvements in the numbers of children healthy and ready for school, however, the Act recognizes that County Commissions must confront a number of challenges and factors that are outside the scope of county public systems. Among these are state and federal policies that constrain effective local action, inadequate support for training, families who are not in contact with public systems for a variety of reasons, and many others.

To address these issues, statewide systemic support is needed. Accordingly, the Act established the State Commission to provide statewide leadership and serve as the statewide coordinator for Prop 10 activities. With the well-being of young Californians from before birth to five years of age its sole charge, the Commission has the ability to look across programs and agencies at both the state and local level to find and address key leverage points for improvement. It serves as advocate, policy leader, public educator, and funder of a range of capacity-building and demonstration projects and research and evaluation efforts that will support County Commissions and local agencies across the state in improving life for young children in their communities.

### **The State Commission's Action Plan: Objectives and Priorities**

Prop 10 is about ensuring that all young children in California are provided with the best opportunities for physical, emotional, cognitive, and social development by the time they get to school. As the framework on Attachment A shows, a systemic approach to healthy child development places the child and family at the center and works to integrate health care, child development, and family support around them, honoring the principle of the family as the child's first teacher, provider, and procurer of services. While fundamental needs for nurturing and development are basically the same for all children, an effective systemic approach to the State Commission's overarching goal of "school readiness" must recognize and address the complex, interrelated, and individual developmental needs of California children and needs of families who are diverse in every way: economically, ethnically, linguistically, and in how and why they use (or don't use) publicly funded or regulated services.

In light of the challenges posed by the current fragmented system, the State Commission recognizes the need to ask hard questions and to build on research to create effective solutions. For example, a commitment to placing the family at the center leads naturally to the notion of family support as a key strategy to consider programs and policies that strengthen the family and help parents support their children's development. But research shows that a multi-pronged approach is needed to both increase the awareness for early childhood development and to improve school readiness. To do that, family resource centers, child care centers/homes, home visitation programs, and the health community must integrate and combine their knowledge base, skills, and other capacities that lead to richer, more socially and intellectually stimulating environments and experiences for children. Conversely, efforts that focus solely on current systems of day care and child development are likely to fall short. The data tell us that 62 percent of preschool age children have two working parents; 70 percent receive some or most of their care outside the home by the time they are age five. Of those children fewer than one third are in licensed care. The others are cared for by friends and relatives, leaving a very large

number of children unreached and unaffected by changes in the publicly funded child care system.

This crucial issue and others like it show the need for a research-based, multi-pronged, strategic approach that reaches all families. The "CCFC Action Plan" chart on Attachment B places the State Commission's activities in the context of such an approach. The key to systemic change is to empower the community by increasing the public's knowledge of the critical nature of a positive and healthy environment and learning experiences for California's youngest children. Increased education of the public will result in the advocacy and support needed for policy and practice changes. Policymakers will also be better informed, and willing to make policy and structural changes to enable the best results for young children. Those changes include removing barriers and fostering innovation to improve access to quality programs and services for families, as well as building family and community capacity to nurture young children. The role of the State Commission in providing research and evaluating for results and continuous quality improvement will achieve long-term improved results for children and their families.

To accomplish the systemic change envisioned by Prop 10, the State Commission will concentrate its efforts and funding in five areas. The State Commission's Objectives and Priorities that have been proposed to date are listed under each area. Many objectives and priorities are still under development and will be considered for inclusion at a later date or in a future year. These five areas are the concurrent and sequential building blocks to realize the mission and goals of the State Commission: I) Changing Public Awareness: Public Education and Media Outreach; II) Improving Quality and Accessibility of Programs: Statewide Capacity and Infrastructure Development; III) Improving the Quality and Accessibility of Programs: Innovative Approaches/Partnerships and Demonstrations/Pilot Programs; IV) Evaluating for Results: Research and Evaluation; and V) Improving Public Policy: Policy Development and Advocacy.

### **Objectives and Priorities for each Building Block**

#### **I. Changing Public Awareness: Public Education and Media Outreach**

To create an informed climate for change, all Californians, whether in contact with our current child-serving systems or not, need to understand the importance of early child development: to know what young children need, how to provide it, and why it matters. To educate the public on these issues the State Commission will fund broad media and public education campaigns such as its initial billboard and television campaigns ("You are your child's first teacher"; "Please don't smoke in my world"); a pilot test of the Kit for New Parents; a parent's guide; as well as more specifically targeted messages to prevent parental use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs, what to look for when shopping for child care, and others. Public education and outreach are important not only in reaching families who do not use public services, but also providers, policymakers, and the public at large.

### **Objectives and Priorities:**

- A. Support development and dissemination of Kit for New Parents (\$700,000.00 approved to fund pilot phase of program, including evaluation).
- B. Develop and maintain public education/mass media campaigns that raise the awareness of, among other things, child development (good parenting, literacy development, child care, etc.), maternal and child health (nutrition, breastfeeding, oral health, lead poisoning, etc.), the importance of school readiness, and the devastating effects of tobacco use by pregnant women and second hand smoke exposure for young children.
- C. Develop proposal for possible community-based organization (CBO) outreach campaign, including regional strategies for rural counties.

[NOTE: These objectives and priorities will be procured through media and public relations contracts. They envision the State Commission utilizing its media funds to provide County Commissions with media and public relations services on their behalf. This will ensure consistent messages and reduce the potential for overlapping expenditures, thus freeing up more funds locally for direct services.]

## **II. Improving Quality and Accessibility of Programs: Statewide Capacity and Infrastructure Development**

In order to provide the most effective services for young children, providers and caregivers need to learn and practice new approaches. This in turn needs to be enabled by training and supported by appropriate organizational structures, standards, and incentives. The State Commission is interested in building the necessary statewide infrastructure to support these changes locally. To do this, the Commission will seek to fund projects that have (or have the potential for) statewide impact or use.

### **Objectives and Priorities:**

#### **A. Support Development of Standards, Curricula and Educational Materials**

- 1. Support development and dissemination of program standards and training curricula for family resource centers, home visitation programs, and other integrated outreach and service delivery/support programs, including standards to promote optimal child development, parent education, and school readiness.
- 2. Support the development and dissemination of developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically appropriate and inclusive

training materials and curricula for all child care providers, including unlicensed providers.

3. Develop parent education resources, including family literacy materials, Kit for New Parents, and outreach materials.

#### B. Provide Training, Training Materials, and Technical Assistance

1. Develop and provide multidisciplinary training for practitioners that links health and wellness, child care and early education, and parent education and support services, including, where appropriate, home visitation, family coordinated services and supports, and community and family capacity building.
2. Ensure ongoing in-service training and career development opportunities for child care providers (including unlicensed providers) and preschool teachers that promote career education and development and staff retention.
3. Develop and provide developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically appropriate and inclusive training curricula for all child care providers and caregivers. Address training gaps, for example, parent education and involvement; prevention of abuse and neglect and care of abused or neglected children; children with special needs; family literacy; coordinated services/interdisciplinary service delivery; infant/toddler issues; bonding and attachment; child development and school readiness; training for administrators.
4. Develop physician, nurse practitioner and other provider training programs for patient education and direct referral of pregnant women to smoking cessation programs.
5. Continue to provide support and technical assistance to County Commissions, including assistance in developing, updating, refining, and implementing of their strategic plans.

#### C. Provide Funding for Facilities and Site Improvement

1. Provide funding for child care facilities, especially those located on school sites, and/or are coordinated with family resource centers.

#### D. Projects Previously Approved by the Commission for Operation in 2000/01

1. Ensure the availability of safe and healthy child care facilities and family child care homes (\$3.0 million approved for safety initiatives 1/2000).
2. Expand opportunities for family literacy and pre-literacy programs for young children (\$1.1 million approved 1/2000).
3. Expand the number of accredited child care centers and family child care homes serving children in low performing school attendance areas (\$2.0 million approved for centers 1/2000 and \$3.0 million approved for family child care homes).
4. Expand current pre service training programs to promote the availability of licensed child care providers, particularly in underserved areas and for underserved populations (\$5 million approved 1/2000).
5. Extend the California Reading and Literature Project to child care providers (\$5.0 million approved 1/2000).
6. Fund additional mobile labs for the State Library Families for Literacy Mobile Learning Labs (\$2.1 million approved 1/2000).

### **III. Improving the Quality and Accessibility of Programs: Innovative Approaches/Partnerships and Demonstrations/Pilot Programs**

Policy makers, County Commissions and providers need working models of new and better approaches for young children, in particular, approaches that integrate several systems of service delivery. In conjunction with County Commissions, the State Commission will seek to fund projects that generate valuable innovative examples and experiments for study and potential replication, at both the state and local levels.

#### **Objectives and Priorities:**

- A. In conjunction with community health clinics, community based organizations, and child care programs and referral services, fund demonstration programs that will expand families' access to information, counseling and services in such areas as: prenatal care; child care, child health, nutrition and dental programs; and family support services. The demonstration programs should foster linkages among community resources, including child care, schools, and family resource centers and will support counties that represent the geographic, linguistic, and cultural diversity in the state. At least one program will target agricultural mobile populations in the central valley region, and at least one program will serve Northern California rural counties on a regional basis.

**B. Offer Enhanced Professional Compensation**

1. Provide matching funds to County Commissions for efforts to link and reward training and compensation (\$1.0 million approved for research and pilots 1/2000).

**C. Offer matching funds to County Commissions for programs that provide prenatal and perinatal alcohol, tobacco and other drug assessment, prevention and cessation efforts that are linked to community based support services.**

**D. Support programs that increase the percentage of children who are fully immunized, e.g., the establishment of a statewide immunization registry.**

**E. Expand the availability of “early intervention/inclusion specialists” in child care settings for families with children with special needs.**

**IV. Evaluating for Results: Research and Evaluation**

While Proposition 10 as a whole is built on a strong foundation of existing research on early childhood development, many gaps remain in our understanding of how current systems and programs interact and how families and children are affected by them. New initiatives launched under Prop 10, whether in public education, policy, or changes in local practices and programs, must be evaluated closely and the results widely communicated so that policymakers, providers, and families can learn from them. The State Commission will fund research and evaluation projects that fill in the gaps in our knowledge and help to improve programs and achieve positive results.

**Objectives and Priorities:**

- A. Based on the adopted “Results” document, develop a comprehensive set of data collection tools and indicators for County Commissions to use in gauging their progress toward achieving outcomes and meeting their annual reporting requirements.
- B. Procure a survey and analysis of policy makers and the public of their opinions and knowledge of parenting, early childhood development and school readiness in order to guide our public education efforts and policy development.
- C. Conduct an analysis of parent education, consumer education, and family support providers, materials and programs.
- D. In conjunction with County Commissions, support development and evaluation of demonstration programs for achieving Prop 10 results.

- E. Support development and dissemination of information on research based best and promising practices and strategies designed to address the objectives of the Act.

F. Projects Previously Approved by the Commission for Operation in 2000/01

1. Conduct statewide household survey of health care and developmental needs of young children (\$2.0 million approved 1/2000).
2. Analyze barriers to child care for children with special needs and develop policy recommendations to improve access (\$0.7 million approved 1/2000).
3. Analyze the issue of retention and compensation of child care providers and develop an action plan (\$1.0 million approved 1/2000).

**V. Improving Public Policy: Policy Development and Advocacy**

The State Commission works collaboratively with other existing state agencies to develop more effective policies for young children and to better coordinate existing state resources and programs that serve them. The State Commission also advocates in the State Legislature and elsewhere for the adoption of more effective policies. Where appropriate, the State Commission may allocate Proposition 10 funds to other state agencies to establish, expand, or improve programs that are critical to young children's success.

A. Projects Previously Approved by the Commission for Operation in 2000/01

1. Support programs that help families to improve health outcomes and school readiness for children with asthma (\$6.1 million approved 1/2000).
2. Promote mental health and family support for at-risk families with children under age three (\$3.6 million approved 1/2000).
3. Expand opportunities to link child care programs with public health systems and to support healthy families (\$4.0 million approved 1/2000).

**Selection of Projects to be Funded**

The State Commission intends to procure these various projects through a competitive process beginning in late summer. Notices of our Requests for Proposals will be advertised on our web page and sent to interested parties currently on our mailing lists.

These Objectives and Priorities will be reviewed at least annually to ensure that the Commission is responding to and addressing current needs and issues. **It is important to note that not all of the objectives and priorities may be funded in a given funding cycle, based on the assessment of priorities and available State Commission resources.**



To guide its work, the CFCC has considered the following Guiding Principles. These principles are intended to be overarching statements of values that guide all Commission activities and responsibilities.

### **California Children and Families Commission (CCFC) Guiding Principles**

The overarching goal of the CCFC is to support and promote children's healthy development and school readiness. In doing so, the Commission intends to incorporate the following Guiding Principles in all of its activities:

1. Support families as children's primary caregivers and first teachers.
2. Respond to the voices and views of parents, caregivers, children and our partners in County Commissions.
3. Ensure that families from all of California's culturally, linguistically, and geographically diverse populations, including those with special needs, can connect to a system of services that is easy to access, use, and understand.
4. Maximize the use of all available local, state, federal, and private resources to target and improve services for young children and their families.
5. Incorporate the highest quality standards for programs; utilize research to support promising and best practices.
6. Build on the foundation of existing expertise and capacity and work to increase it.
7. Provide a laboratory for exploring promising practices and a forum for exchanging information about practices that could be effective statewide.
8. Focus on results, using results-based assessment and evaluation of local and state programs and strategies.
9. Promote policy enhancement and system changes that will support the healthy development and school readiness of all California children.
10. Promote collaboration and partnerships across all family support services systems that will enhance families' ability to access those systems at any one point for all needed services.

